

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 019883
ORIGIN ARA-14

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TO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SHUM, GY

SUBJECT:HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT - DRAFT

REF: STATE 018330

1. FOLLOWING IS DRAFT OF UNCLASSIFIED VERSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT THAT MUST BE SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS BY JANUARY 31. IT HAS BEEN CLEARED THROUGHOUT THE DEPARTMENT. REQUEST EMBASSY COMMENTS ON THIS DRAFT ASAP, BUT NO LATER THAN COB WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25.

2. GUYANA IS A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY WITH A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM ON THE BRITISH MODEL. SINCE THE EARLY 1960'S GUYANA, LED BY PRIME MINISTER FORBES BURNHAM, HAS FOLLOWED AN AVOWEDLY SOCIALIST PATH TOWARD POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. THE COUNTRY AND ITS PRESENT LEADERS REMAIN ROOTED IN THE ANGLO-SAXON TRADITION
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PAGE 02 STATE 019883

OF RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND OF OBSERVANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF LAW. ELECTIONS ARE HELD EVERY FIVE YEARS AND ARE CONTESTED BY VARIOUS POLITICAL PARTIES. THE NEXT ELECTIONS ARE SCHEDULED FOR THE FALL OF 1978.

THE RACIAL COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION (53 EAST

INDIAN AND 42 BLACK) HAS CREATED STRAINS WITHIN THE GUYANESE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE. HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT HAS VOICED ITS FULL SUPPORT FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HAS CONDEMNED VIOLATIONS. REPORTS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE EAST INDIAN POPULATION HAVE SURFACED IN RECENT YEARS, BUT SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THEM.

3. RESPECT FOR THE INTEGRITY OF THE PERSON, INCLUDING FREEDOM FROM:

A. TORTURE

THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT TORTURE HAS BEEN USED.

B. CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

THERE ARE NO REPORTS OF CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT.

C. ARBITRARY ARREST OR IMPRISONMENT

THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS OF ARBITRARY ARREST OR IMPRISONMENT.

D. DENIAL OF FAIR PUBLIC TRIAL
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PAGE 03 STATE 019883

THERE ARE NO REPORTS OF DENIAL OF FAIR PUBLIC TRIAL. HOWEVER, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IN NOVEMBER 1977 SENT TO GUYANA A REPRESENTATIVE TO ATTEND THE TRIAL OF A GUYANESE ACCUSED OF KILLING A POLICEMAN. THE OPPOSITION PARTY, THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY, CHARGED THAT THE TRIAL WAS POLITICALLY INSPIRED AND THAT IT AMOUNTED TO POLITICAL PERSECUTION AGAINST ONE OF ITS MEMBERS. IN DECEMBER 1977, AFTER A THIRD TRIAL, THE ACCUSED WAS FOUND NOT GUILTY BY THE JURY AND RELEASED.

E. INVASION OF THE HOME

THERE ARE FEW REPORTS OF INVASION OF THE HOME. SOME HOMES HAVE BEEN SEARCHED FOR CONTRABAND WITHOUT A WARRANT.

4. GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES RELATING TO THE FULFILLMENT OF SUCH VITAL NEEDS AS FOOD, SHELTER, HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION

THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSCIOUS OF THE BASIC NEEDS OF ITS POPULATION AND IS STRIVING TO MEET THEM WITHIN THE

LIMITS OF THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE. SOME EAST INDIAN GUYANESE CLAIM THAT THE PRESENT BLACK LEADERSHIP OF GUYANA GIVES PREFERENCE TO THE BLACK POPULATION IN SUCH AREAS AS SHELTER, HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION. THERE MAY BE SOME JUSTIFICATION OF THESE CHARGES.

THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE TO SUBSTANTIATE MOST OF THE REPORTS OF CORRUPTION TO THE BENEFIT OF THE NATION S POLITICAL RULERS AND THE BLACK MINORITY.

5. RESPECT FOR CIVIL AND POLITICAL LIBERTIES, INCLUDING:

A. FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, SPEECH, PRESS, RELIGION, AND ASSEMBLY
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PAGE 04 STATE 019883

THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA HAS A NEAR MONOPOLY OF THE MEDIA, INCLUDING ALL RADIO STATIONS (THERE IS NO TV IN GUYANA) AND ONE OF THE THREE MAJOR NEWSPAPERS. THESE MEDIA ELEMENTS REFLECT GOVERNMENT POLICIES FAITHFULLY AND DO NOT CRITICIZE ITS ACTIONS. THE OPPOSITION PAPERS - ONE PUBLISHED BY THE OPPOSITION PARTY, THE PEOPLE S PROGRESSIVE PARTY, AND THE OTHER, THE CATHOLIC STANDARD, BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH - HAVE BEEN HAMPERED BY OCCASIONAL GOVERNMENT RESTRAINTS ON NEWSPRINT AND EQUIPMENT IMPORTS. AT AN OCTOBER 1977 MEETING OF THE INTER-AMERICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION, SEVERAL SPEAKERS STATED THAT THERE IS "GRAVE DANGER TO THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN GUYANA" BECAUSE OF GOVERNMENTAL INTER-FERENCE. THIS ALLEGATION WAS STRONGLY DENIED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

THERE ARE NO REPORTS OF INTERFERENCE IN THE RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY OF RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION. HOWEVER, DURING 1976 ALL CHURCH-RUN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS WERE TAKEN OVER BY THE STATE.

B. FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT WITHIN THE COUNTRY, FOREIGN TRAVEL AND EMIGRATION

IN GUYANA THERE IS NO RESTRICTION ON TRAVEL WITHIN OR WITHOUT THE COUNTRY NOR IS THERE ANY OBSTACLE TO EMIGRATION. THE ONLY EXCEPTION APPLIES TO CERTAIN DISPUTED BORDER AREAS OVER WHICH VENEZUELA AND SURINAM MAKE CLAIMS.

C. FREEDOM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

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IN THE GENERAL ELECTIONS OF 1968 AND 1973 CHARGES OF FRAUD AND RIGGING WERE WIDESPREAD. THERE IS SOME EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THESE ALLEGATIONS.

THE OPPOSITION PARTY ALLEGES PUBLICLY THAT BECAUSE OF THIS FRAUD AND RIGGING, THE EAST INDIAN MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION IS INADEQUATELY REPRESENTED IN THE PARLIAMENT. THE GOVERNMENT REJECTS THESE ALLEGATIONS.

6. GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE AND RECORD REGARDING INTERNATIONAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA PERMITTED A NOVEMBER, 1977 VISIT BY AN AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, AS NOTED UNDER ID. GUYANA IS NOT A MEMBER OF THE OAS AND THE INTER-AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION HAS NOT VISITED GUYANA.

7. THIS IS NOT THE "FINAL APPROVED TEXT" MENTIONED REFTEL AND IS SUBMITTED FOR POST COMMENT ONLY. IT SHOULD NOT BE PROVIDED TO THE HOST GOVERNMENT. FINAL VERSION WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE EMBASSY AFTER RECEIVING EMBASSY'S COMMENTS ON DRAFT. VANCE

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